

Coordinating Agency:

Department of Homeland Security

Cooperating Agencies:

All Federal departments and agencies (and other organizations) with assigned primary or supporting Emergency Support Function (ESF) responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Catastrophic Incident Annex to the National Response Framework (NRF-CIA) establishes the context and overarching strategy for implementing and coordinating an accelerated, proactive national response to a catastrophic incident.

A more detailed and operationally specific National Response Framework Catastrophic Incident Supplement (NRF-CIS) is published independently of the NRF and annexes.

Scope

A catastrophic incident, as defined by the NRF, is any natural or manmade incident, including terrorism, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions. A catastrophic incident could result in sustained national impacts over a prolonged period of time; almost immediately exceeds resources normally available to State, tribal, local, and private-sector authorities in the impacted area; and significantly interrupts governmental operations and emergency services to such an extent that national security could be threatened. These factors drive the urgency for coordinated national planning to ensure accelerated Federal/national assistance.

Recognizing that Federal and/or national resources are required to augment overwhelmed State, tribal, and local response efforts, the NRF-CIA establishes protocols to preidentify and rapidly deploy key essential resources (e.g., medical teams, urban search and rescue teams, transportable shelters, medical and equipment caches, etc.) that are expected to be urgently needed/required to save lives and contain incidents.

Accordingly, upon designation by the Secretary of Homeland Security of a catastrophic incident, Federal resources, organized into incident-specific "packages," deploy in accordance with the NRF-CIS and in coordination with the affected State and incident command structure.

Where State, tribal, or local authorities are unable to establish or maintain an effective incident command structure due to catastrophic conditions, the Federal Government, at the direction of the Secretary of Homeland Security may establish a unified command structure to save lives, protect property, secure critical infrastructure/key resources, contain the event, and protect national security. The Federal Government shall transition to its normal role supporting incident command through State, tribal, or local authorities when their command is reestablished.

The Catastrophic Incident Annex is primarily designed to address no-notice or short-notice incidents of catastrophic magnitude, where the need for Federal assistance is obvious and immediate, where anticipatory planning and resource pre-positioning were precluded, and where the exact nature of needed resources and assets is not known. Appropriately tailored assets and responses identified in the NRF-CIS, as well as other select Federal resources and assets, also may be deployed in support of a projected catastrophic event (e.g., a major hurricane) with advance warning in support of the anticipated requests of State, tribal, and local authorities.

Policies

If an event is catastrophic in nature, the Secretary of Homeland Security or a designee directs implementation of the NRF-CIA and execution of the NRF-CIS.

Only the Secretary of Homeland Security or designee may initiate implementation of the NRF-CIA.

All deploying Federal resources remain under the control of their respective Federal department or agency during mobilization and deployment.

Federal resources arriving at a Federal mobilization center or staging area remain there until requested by State/local incident command authorities, when they are integrated into the incident response effort.

Federal assets unilaterally deployed to the mobilization or staging site in accordance with the NRF-CIS do not require a State cost share. However, in accordance with the Stafford Act, State requests for use of deployed Federal assets may require cost-sharing.

For no-notice or short-notice catastrophic incidents, Federal resources identified in the execution matrix of the NRF-CIS will be mobilized and deployed, unless it can be credibly established that an action listed is not needed at the catastrophic incident venue.

If during an incident response, it is determined that the incident is catastrophic in nature, any remaining actions not originally initiated from the execution matrix will be initiated.

States are encouraged to conduct planning in collaboration with the Federal Government for catastrophic incidents as part of their steady-state preparedness activities.

The Federal Government, in collaboration with States and tribes, develops proactive plans for activation and implementation of the NRF-CIA, to include situations where State and local governments are incapable of responding and where the Federal Government may temporarily assume roles typically performed by State, tribal, and local governments.

The occurrence or threat of multiple or successive catastrophic incidents may significantly reduce the size, speed, and depth of the Federal response. If deemed necessary or prudent, the Federal Government may reduce the availability or allocation of finite resources when multiple venues are competing for the same resources, or hold certain resources in reserve in case of additional incidents.

Situation

Continuity of Operations (COOP)/Continuity of Government (COG): Following a catastrophic event, segments of State, tribal, and local authorities as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector may be severely compromised. The Federal Government and its national partners must be prepared to fill potential gaps to ensure continuity of government and public and private sector operations. The incident may cause significant disruption of the impacted area's critical infrastructure, such as energy, transportation, telecommunications, law enforcement, and public health and medical systems.

Incident Condition: Normal procedures for certain ESFs may be expedited or streamlined to address the magnitude of urgent requirements of the incident. All ESFs must explore economies of scale to maximize utilization and efficiency of scarce resources. In the case of a catastrophic incident, it is expected that the Federal Government or other national entities provide expedited assistance in one or more of the following areas:

- **Mass Evacuations (ESFs #1 – Transportation and #5 – Emergency Management):** While primarily a State, tribal, and local responsibility, Federal support may be required as large-scale evacuations, organized or self-directed, may occur. There may also be a need for evacuation of large numbers of people out of the impacted area to safe areas in other States, requiring significant transportation and shelter coordination and resources. There is likely to be significant shortage of response and casualty/evacuee reception capabilities throughout the impacted area.
- **Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services (ESF #6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services):** The ability to support the provision of temporary shelter, food, emergency first aid, and other essential life support to people in the affected State may be complicated by contaminated resources or facilities and impact the ability to quickly transport resources into the area.
- **Search and Rescue (ESF #9 – Search and Rescue):** Resources and personnel to perform operational activities (e.g., locating, extricating, and providing onsite medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures) are limited. If search and rescue operations are required in areas of contamination, the limited availability of properly equipped resources supports or underscores the need for prompt Federal response.
- **Decontamination (ESFs #8 – Public Health and Medical Services and #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response):** Incidents involving a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) may require decontamination of casualties, evacuees, animals, equipment, buildings, critical infrastructure, and other areas. Given the potentially large numbers of casualties and evacuees, resulting decontamination requirements may quickly outstrip State, tribal, and local capabilities.
- **Public Health and Medical Support (ESF #8):** There is a significant need for public health and medical support, including mental health services. Medical support is required not only at medical facilities, but at casualty evacuation points, evacuee and refugee points and shelters, and other locations to support field operations. In addition, any contamination requirement increases the requirement for technical assistance/resources.
- **Medical Equipment and Supplies (ESF #8):** Shortages of available supplies of preventive and therapeutic pharmaceuticals and qualified medical personnel to administer available prophylaxis are likely. Timely distribution of prophylaxis may forestall additional illnesses, and reduce the impact of disease among those already exposed.

- 1 • **Casualty and Fatality Management and Transportation (ESF #8):** Federal resources
2 may be required to manage the transportation and storage of deceased, injured, and
3 exposed victims if their numbers are extremely high. In addition, the immense numbers of
4 casualties are likely to overwhelm the bed capacities of State, tribal, and local medical
5 facilities.
6
- 7 • **Public Safety and Security (ESF #13 – Public Safety and Security):** Federal
8 resources may be required to augment State, tribal, and local authorities to protect the
9 public and secure the impacted area. Law enforcement and emergency management
10 officials who normally respond to incidents may be among those affected and unable to
11 perform their duties.
12
- 13 • **Public Information (ESF #15 – External Affairs):** When State, tribal, and local public
14 communications channels are overwhelmed during a catastrophic incident, the Federal
15 Government must immediately provide resources to assist in delivering clear and coherent
16 public information guidance and consistent messages to the affected areas.
17

Planning Assumptions

19 A catastrophic incident may result in large numbers of casualties and/or displaced persons,
20 possibly in the tens to hundreds of thousands. During an incident response, priority is given to
21 human life-saving operations.
22

23 The nature and scope of a catastrophic incident may immediately overwhelm State, tribal, and
24 local response capabilities and require immediate Federal support.
25

26 A detailed and credible common operating picture may not be achievable for 24 to 48 hours (or
27 longer) after the incident. As a result, response activities must begin without the benefit of a
28 detailed or complete situation and critical needs assessment.
29

30 A catastrophic incident will trigger a Presidential disaster declaration, immediately or otherwise.
31 The Secretary of Homeland Security or a designee implements the NRF-CIA/CIS.
32

33 The nature and scope of the catastrophic incident may include chemical, biological, radiological,
34 nuclear, or high-yield explosive attacks, disease epidemics, cyber attacks, and major natural or
35 manmade hazards.
36

37 A catastrophic incident has unique dimensions/characteristics requiring that response
38 plans/strategies be flexible enough to effectively address emerging needs and requirements.
39

40 A catastrophic incident may occur with little or no warning. Some incidents, such as rapid
41 disease outbreaks, may be well underway before detection.
42

43 Multiple incidents may occur simultaneously or sequentially in contiguous and/or noncontiguous
44 areas. Some incidents, such as a biological WMD attack, may be dispersed over a large
45 geographic area and lack a defined incident site.
46

47 A catastrophic incident may produce environmental impacts (e.g., persistent chemical,
48 biological, or radiological contamination) that severely challenge the ability and capacity of
49 governments and communities to achieve a timely recovery.
50

51 Federal support must be provided in a timely manner to save lives, prevent human suffering,
52 and mitigate severe damage. This may require mobilizing and deploying resources before they
53 are requested via normal NRF protocols.
54

Large-scale evacuations, organized or self-directed, may occur. More people initially are likely to flee and shelter outside of areas involving chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents than for natural events. The health related implications of these incidents may aggravate attempts to implement a coordinated evacuation management strategy.

Large numbers of people may be left temporarily or permanently homeless and may require prolonged temporary housing.

A catastrophic incident may have significant international dimensions. These include impacts on the health and welfare of border community populations, cross-border trade, transit, law enforcement coordination, and other areas.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

State, Tribal, and Local Response

State, tribal, and local response operations and responsibilities are covered in the NRF and the NRF-CIS. This annex addresses the proactive Federal response to be taken in anticipation of or following a catastrophic incident to rapidly provide critical resources to assist and augment State, tribal, and local response efforts.

Federal Response

In accordance with NRF provisions for a proactive Federal response to catastrophic incidents, the NRF-CIA employs an expedited approach to the provision of Federal resources to save lives and contain the incident.

Guiding principles for a proactive Federal catastrophic incident response include the following:

- The primary mission is to save lives, protect property and critical infrastructure, contain the event, and protect the national security.
- Standard procedures outlined in the NRF regarding requests for assistance may be expedited or, under extreme circumstances, temporarily suspended in the immediate aftermath of an incident of catastrophic magnitude, pursuant to existing law.
- Preidentified Federal response resources are mobilized and deployed, and, if required, begin emergency operations to commence life-safety activities.
- Notification and full coordination with States occur, but the coordination process should not delay or impede the rapid mobilization and deployment of critical Federal resources.
- Upon recognition that a catastrophic incident condition (e.g., involving mass casualties and/or mass evacuation) exists, the Secretary of Homeland Security immediately begins, potentially in advance of a formal Presidential disaster declaration, DHS implementation of the NRF-CIA. Upon notification from the National Operations Center (NOC) that the NRF-CIA has been implemented, Federal departments and agencies immediately:
 - Take actions to activate, mobilize, and deploy incident-specific resources in accordance with the NRF-CIS.
 - Take actions to protect life, property, and critical infrastructure under their jurisdiction, and provide assistance within the affected area.
 - Commence those hazard-specific activities established under the appropriate and applicable NRF Incident Annex(es), including the NRF-CIA.

- Commence functional activities and responsibilities established under the NRF ESF Annexes.

NRF-CIA actions that the Federal Government takes in response to a catastrophic incident include:

- For no-notice or short-notice catastrophic events when there is little or no time to assess the requirements of the State, tribal, and local authorities, all Federal departments and agencies and the American Red Cross initiate actions to mobilize and deploy resources by scenario type as planned for in the NRF-CIS.
- For those potential catastrophic incidents where there is time to coordinate with State, tribal, local, and private-sector authorities, Federal departments and agencies and the American Red Cross will predeploy appropriately tailored elements of the NRF-CIS, as well as other Federal resources as required to meet the anticipated demands of the specific incident scenario.

All Federal departments and agencies and organizations (e.g., the American Red Cross) assigned primary or supporting ESF responsibilities immediately begin implementation of those responsibilities, as appropriate or when directed by the President.

Incident-specific resources and capabilities (e.g., medical teams, search and rescue teams, equipment, transportable shelters, preventive and therapeutic pharmaceutical caches, etc.) are activated and prepared for deployment to a Federal mobilization center or staging area near the incident site. The development of site-specific catastrophic incident response strategies (as detailed in the NRF-CIS) that include the preidentification of incident-specific critical resource requirements and corresponding deployment/employment strategies accelerate the timely provision of critically skilled resources and capabilities.

Regional Federal facilities (e.g., hospitals) are activated and prepared to receive and treat casualties from the incident area. Federal facilities are directed to reprioritize services (in some cases reducing or postponing certain customary services) until life-saving activities are concluded. The development of site-specific catastrophic incident response plans that include the preidentification of projected casualty and mass care support requirements and potentially available facilities expands the response architecture and accelerates the availability of such resources.

Supplementary support agreements with NGOs and the private sector are activated.

Given the projected high demand for Federal augmentation support, as well as the potential national security implications of a catastrophic incident, Federal departments and agencies may be asked to redirect efforts from their day-to-day responsibilities to support the response effort.

1 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

2
3 This section summarizes Federal department and agency responsibilities under the NRF-CIA.
4 For a complete listing of Federal department and agency responsibilities under the NRF-CIA,
5 refer to the NRF-CIS, which is maintained as a separate document. For additional Federal
6 department and agency responsibilities, refer to the individual ESF Annexes and hazard-specific
7 Incident Annexes in the NRF.
8

9 **Coordinating Agency: DHS**

- 10
11 • Establishes that a catastrophic incident has occurred and implements the NRF-CIA.
12
13 • Notifies all Federal departments and agencies to implement the NRF-CIA and the NRF-CIS.
14
15 • Upon implementation of the NRF-CIA:
16
17 • Activates and deploys (or prepares to deploy) DHS-managed teams, equipment caches,
18 and other resources in accordance with the NRF-CIS.
19 • Identifies, prepares, and operationalizes facilities critical to supporting the movement
20 and reception of deploying Federal resources.
21 • Activates national-level facilities and capabilities in accordance with the NRF-CIS and
22 standard NRF protocols.
23 • Establishes and maintains communications with incident command authorities to ensure
24 a common and current operating picture regarding critical resource requirements. As
25 specific resource requirements are identified, advises DHS/Federal Emergency
26 Management Agency to reprioritize and adjust accordingly the schedule of execution for
27 resource flow in the NRF-CIS.
28 • Makes every attempt to establish contact with the impacted State(s) to coordinate the
29 employment of Federal resources in support of the State(s).
30

31 **Cooperating Agencies**

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33 When notified by the NOC that the Secretary of Homeland Security has implemented the NRF-
34 CIA, Federal departments and agencies (and the American Red Cross):
35

- 36 • Activate and deploy (or prepare to deploy) agency- or ESF-managed teams, equipment
37 caches, and other resources in accordance with the NRF-CIS.
38 • Commence ESF responsibilities as appropriate.
39 • Commence assessments of the probable consequences of the incident and projected
40 resource requirements.
41 • Commence development of shorter and longer term response and recovery strategies.
42

43 The NRF-CIS provides a list of the specific actions that are initiated upon activation of the NRF-
44 CIA. The following Federal departments and agencies and other organizations are assigned
45 specific responsibilities as cooperating agencies:
46

- 47 • Department of Agriculture
48 • Department of Defense
49 • Department of Energy
50 • Department of Health and Human Services
51 • Department of Homeland Security
52 • Department of Transportation
53 • Department of Veterans Affairs
54 • Environmental Protection Agency

Departments and agencies assigned primary responsibility for one or more functional response areas under the NRF-CIS appendixes are identified below.

- **Mass Care:** American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency
- **Search and Rescue:** Department of Homeland Security
- **Decontamination:** Department of Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency (critical infrastructure and the environment), and Department of Health and Human Services (patients, victims, casualties)
- **Public Health and Medical Support:** Department of Health and Human Services
- **Medical Equipment and Supplies:** Department of Health and Human Services
- **Patient Movement:** Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Defense
- **Mass Fatality:** Department of Health and Human Services
- **Housing:** Department of Homeland Security
- **Public and Incident Communications:** Department of Homeland Security
- **Transportation:** Department of Homeland Security and Department of Transportation
- **Private-Sector Support:** Department of Homeland Security
- **Logistics:** Department of Homeland Security

The Department of Defense (DOD) is the only Federal agency that supports all ESFs. To that end, DOD is prepared to provide capabilities in the following support categories: aviation, communication, defense coordinating officer/defense coordinating element, medical treatment, and patient evacuation, decontamination, and logistics.